**Blandin Community Broadband Program**

**Broadband Innovation grant application instructions**

The [Broadband Innovation grant program](https://blandinfoundation.org/programs/broadband/broadband-innovation-grants/) will provide matching funds to eligible applicants in rural Minnesota communities to support projects designed to promote *access*, *adoption* and *use* of broadband technologies.

**Access** strategies are designed to improve a community’s access to broadband services, either communitywide or in targeted locations.

**Adoption** strategies are designed to overcome barriers to the use of broadband technologies within the community, with a focus on end-user devices, broadband services and training.

**Use** strategies are designed to stimulate more active and sophisticated use of available technologies for health care, education, business and government.

The goal of the Broadband Innovation grant program is to assist communities move forward on broadband-based projects.

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

* Conducting a community technology survey
* Holding a community technology fair
* E-Commerce/Technology training for business
* Community web portals
* Public access labs and/or hot spots
* Digital inclusion activities, including computer refurbishing and redistribution projects
* Enhancing broadband access in affordable housing developments
* Two-way video applications for home healthcare, education, etc.

Projects that include primarily bulk purchase of devices (tablets, computers, hot spots, etc.) will not be funded except in the context of implementation of an innovative projects designed to advance use of the technology outside of institutional settings.

**Evaluation Criteria**

Blandin Foundation will use the following criteria to determine project selection:

1. Project meets an identified community need.
2. Community partnerships are evidenced in the proposal.
3. Project increases the technological vitality of the community.
4. Project uses appropriate technology for the stated purpose.
5. Priority consideration will be given to projects that provide community-wide cross-sector benefits.

**Funding**

The maximum grant is $25,000. All projects require matching funds of at least 25% (1:3) of total project cost (for example, a $10,000 grant requires $3,333 match.) Projects demonstrating at least 1:1 match will be viewed favorably. Projects should be designed as to be able to track and report matching funds.

**Response Instructions:**

Application materials should be prepared simply and economically, avoiding the use of elaborate promotional materials beyond those sufficient to provide a complete, accurate and reliable presentation.

Applicants should contact Blandin Community Broadband Program administrator Mary Magnuson (memagnuson@blandinfoundation.org or 218/327-8738) with any questions regarding application, including transmitting draft versions of proposals for pre-submittal review, and for guidance on the online application form. Application materials not submitted via the portal may be emailed to Mary.

**Online grant portal instructions:**

All applicants are encouraged to submit grant applications via the portal.

1. We recommend you use this document to draft your responses to the application questions, and then copy and paste your responses into the application portal.
2. To access the Broadband Innovation grant portal, click <https://blandinfoundation.force.com/grants/FGM_Portal__CommunitySignin?retUrl=/apex/FGM_Portal__CommunityApplication?id=7013m000001ZalF> If this is your first time applying via the portal, click “New Portal User? Register Here!” If you have applied via the portal previously, you may log in as normal and skip step 3.
*The portal is NEW as of February 2021! If you have not applied for a grant since February 2021, you will need to register.*
3. Fill in the grantee registration information as prompted. If the grantee is using a separate fiscal sponsor, create the account under the grantee organization. You will be asked for fiscal sponsor information on tab 2.
4. Once you’ve completed registration, you will be asked to verify your account via email. Once you’ve verified your account, you can log in.
5. Most of the questions are on the first tab, “Project Poposal.” You’ll notice some of the questions are worded differently on the portal than they are on the application instructions, which is due to space limitations on the portal.
6. The second tab is for your fiscal sponsor information. If not using a fiscal sponsor, leave blank.
7. You have the option to upload up your attachments on the budget tab. The attachments are described in detail under section V below.

If you have any questions about the portal, contact Mary Magnuson at memagnuson@blandinfoundation.org.

**Application Form:**

Please use the following outline as a guide to your proposal narrative. Take the space needed to tell your story, but try not to exceed 5-10 pages, excluding attachments.

**Organization Information**

**Proposal Overview**

Project Name:

Duration of project (start date – end date):

**Organization Information**

Name of organization:

Legal name, if different:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Employer Identification Number (EIN):

Phone:

Website:

Name of CEO/Exec Dir.:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Name of contact person regarding this application:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Is your organization an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit? **Yes / No**

If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government? **Yes / No**

If no, list name for fiscal agent:

Fiscal agent address:

Fiscal agent’s EIN:

**Budget Summary**

Fiscal Year of Organization (month – month):

Total project budget: $

Total dollar amount requested of Blandin Foundation: $

Total annual organization budget: $

**Project Summary**

Please provide a 1-2 paragraph description of your project

**Proposal Narrative**

1. Organization Information
	1. Brief summary of organization history, current mission, activities, and accomplishments.
	2. Is your organization best positioned to do the proposed work? Are there opportunities to work together with other organizations for increased impact?
	3. Describe what steps your organization takes to include a broad range of perspectives from the community you seek to serve, such as board and staff members from diverse backgrounds.
	4. Identify specific steps your organization takes to improve organizational effectiveness.
2. Purpose of Grant
	1. Background
		1. Describe how your proposal fits the goals and evaluation criteria of the Broadband Innovation grant program (listed above.)
		2. What organizations and individuals are involved in planning and implementing the project? Would this project benefit from any new/diverse perspectives?
		3. What key relationships critical to the success of this project are in place, or under development?
	2. Implementation
		1. What are the goals of your project?
		2. What strategies and activities will be employed to achieve these goals?
		3. Who will carry out these activities? Do they have the requisite skills and experience?
		4. What are long-term strategies (if applicable) for sustaining this effort?
3. Assessment
	1. Describe what success looks like and how you will measure success (use goals and metrics wherever you can.)
	2. How will you know you’ve reached your project’s goals?
	3. Give specific examples of how your project/program contributes to a healthy rural community.
	4. Explain the process that will be used to measure and document whether progress is being made toward achieving your project’s goals.
4. Budget and Sources of Funding
	1. Provide a brief statement of the amount and type of resources that will be needed to see this project through, and steps you are taking to mobilize the necessary resources.
5. Attachments (please attach the following):
	1. A copy of your organizational budget.
	2. Project budget; please submit a **detailed** project budget including both sources of income for the project (indicate if these funds have been secured or are pending) as well as major expense categories. Be certain to include cash and in-kind matching contributions to the project. Feel free to attach a narrative explaining your numbers if necessary.
	3. Most recent financial statement, from a formal audit if available, showing actual expenses. This information should include a balance sheet, a statement of activities (or statement of income and expenses) and functional expenses. If a formal audit is available, please include the management letter. This audit may be submitted electronically by providing a link to this information.
	4. Brief description of key staff, including qualifications relevant to the specific request. Also provide information on the number of staff and volunteers in the organization.

Should your application be funded, you will also be required to submit an IRS Form W9: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>. You may choose to submit it at the time of your application by emailing it to Mary Magnuson.